CHRISTMAS LEGENDS.

The Lore and Poetry of the Great Festival—Interesting Usages and Traditions—Something for Everybody to Read.

BY SOPHIE SPARKLE.

Some say that ever 'gainst that season comes
Wherein our Savior's birth is celebrated,
This bird of dawning singeth all night long.
—SHAKESPEARE.

Around no season of all the year does there cling so many quaint and curious legends as around the Christmas time. Every nation has its popular traditions concerning this hallowed festival; traditions which have been handed down from generation to generation, in oft-told tales which awaken in the hearts of the listeners feelings of mingled pleasure and fear.

But in this wise, matter-of-fact age of the world, the old legends are fast losing credence. The only one still cherished seems to be that of the good Saint Nicholas, who comes down the chimney to fill the stockings of the little folks!

But even the chimney corners are becoming obsolete, and the precocious Young America puts away this childish belief when he dons his first pair of pants, and ever after disdainfully rejects the idea of a queer little personage who,

"Dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,"

is abroad upon Christmas Eve, carrying gifts to all good children.

But there is, and always will be, a certain charm hovering around the old superstitions. One of the most beautiful of these is, that upon Christmas Eve the cock crows all night long—to "frighten away all evil things from infecting the holy hours."

"And then, they say, no spirit dares stir abroad:
The nights are wholesome, then no planets strike:
No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm,
So hallow'd and so gracious is the time."

Exactly at the hour of midnight upon this mystic eve, the cattle are said to kneel in their stalls, in adoration of the Babe who was born in a manger, and afterward to hold converse like men. Brand relates that in 1770 a Cornish peasant told him that he, with several others, had watched the oxen upon old Christmas Eve, and "at twelve o'clock at night they observed the two oldest oxen to fall upon their knees and to make a cruel moan like Christian creatures." This belief appears not only to have prevailed in England, but also across the seas, as Mr. Howison, in his "Sketches of Upper Canada," says that on one beautiful moonlight Christmas Eve, at the hour of midnight, he met an Indian creeping stealthily along, who motioned to him to keep quiet, and when questioned as to his motive, replied: "Me watch to see the deer kneel; this is Christmas night, and all the deer fall upon their knees to the Great Spirit, and look up." Even the bees are said to hum in their little cells on Christmas Eve at twelve o'clock.

There is a legend which says that the watcher may hear the ringing of subterranean bells tolling the midnight hour upon this night. In mining districts, the miners declare that solemn mass is held in that cavern which contains the richest ore; that service is chanted by invisible beings, and that the cavern is most brilliantly illuminated with candles.

Thus sings an old carol:

"All the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas day, on Christmas day.
And all the bells on earth shall ring
On Christmas day in the morning.

"And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Chrismas day, on Christmas day,
And all the angels in heaven shall sing
On Christmas day in the morning.

"And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas day, on Christmas day.
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas day in the morning."

The Germans also have a traditional Christmas bell. In the village of Morlingen, near Goettingen, there is a pond called Opferteich, a sacrificial pond. The water is very deep, and it is said that every year at Christmas a bell is heard tolling in its depths from the hour of twelve until one.

This bell is the same which once swung in the church-tower near by, but having been placed there without being consecrated by baptism, as was the olden custom, when it commenced to ring out the Christmas chimes, by some supernatural power it was hurled from its place into the depths of the Opferteich, and there it is believed to lie to this very day, and every Christmas Eve to rise to the surface of the pond, toll, and then to sink again.

Should any one desire to know what will be the state of the weather during the ensuing year he has only to take an onion, and cutting it in two, thus making twelve small cups, fill them with salt, and let them stand until the following morning. These cups represent the twelve months of the year, and those in which the salt is found dry will be the dry months, and *vice versa*. So say the legends. Sir Walter Scott says in his notes to "Marmion" that "they who are born on Christmas or Good Friday, have the power of seeing spirits, and even of commanding them!" He also adds that "the Spaniards imputed the haggard and downcast looks of their Philip II. to the disagreeable visions to which this privilege subjected him."

On the banks of the Weser, they say, that no one must spin during the twelve days of Christmas-tide; but they spin toads into the house, or get black-puddings and sausages instead of yarn. This custom is faithfully observed, and if sewing is necessary to be done, they take it to a neighbor's house.

At Christmas all the spinning-wheels are plentifully furnished with flax, and left standing to await the visit of Hulda, the divinity who presides over domestic affairs, and who comes at this season to reward the diligent and punish the idle. But at Shrove-tide when Hulda returns to her home, all the flax must be spun off, and the spinning-wheels be put out of sight—for that which is spun at Shrove-tide, is sure to turn out ill—this being the time of holy rest.

When the sun shines, Hulda is said to be combing her hair; and when it snows, she is spreading her couch. She rides in a chariot, which she once caused a peasant to repair for her, and the chippings which were left behind were found to be of the purest gold. Hulda is represented as an ugly old crone, with dishevelled, tangled locks, and if any one appears with uncombed, bristling hair, it is a common saying that "He has been riding with Hulda!" Let every one henceforth keep their locks well brushed and shining.

During the Christmas season, many animals may not be called by their right names in some parts of Germany, under the penalty of a forfeit. Instead of *fox* they must say *long tail*; for *mouse*, *house-runner*, etc. And some animals, such as the wolf, are not to be mentioned at all. And no animals, except familiar ones, are to be teased or trusted into the house during the Twelfths, since witches and evil spirits are believed to have power at this time to take the shapes of cats, dogs, hares, etc., that they may work ill to others.

Those who are afflicted with ague, should shoot magpies at Christmas time; and if these are burned to powder, they are said to cure this aggravating complaint.

When the candles of the Christmas-tree are lighted, if one would know whether any of the assembled company will die during the year, they should notice the shadows cast upon the wall. If any shadow lacks a head, that person will die.

Here is a queer old legend about the "Man in the Moon."

Many years ago, when wishing took effect, a peasant was discovered, upon Christmas night, stealing his neighbor's cabbages. The owner of these, in a spirit of revenge, wished the thief "up to the moon," and was doubtless much surprised at witnessing the immediate accomplishment of his wish. For the peasant was quickly transported to the moon, where he remains to this day, still bearing his load of cabbages—a constant warning to all purloiners of their neighbors' goods. Every year, on Christmas Eve, by way of resting himself, he is permitted to turn around once. And this reminds us of that world-renowned individual—the wandering Jew—who never rests excepting on this same mysterious night, and then he must sit on a plough in a field.

On Christmas and New Year's nights no person should go to bed, lest the witches come and harm him.

All the doors of the house must be carefully closed, lest strange cats or dogs should enter, who might prove to be witches in disguise.

Something sharp of steel, as a scythe, should be placed in the fodder, that the witches may have no power to harm the cattle. Near Goettingen it is thought, that if the fodder is placed in the open air at Christmas, the cattle will thrive well.

In the same place it is also believed that the hop-vine becomes green upon Christmas Eve, peeping out from beneath the deepest snow, and then afterwards mysteriously disappearing.

In Holstein, and also in many other places, a curious custom called *windowing*, prevails. On Christmas night the young men enter through the windows to see their true-loves, and remain with them until daybreak. The parents, knowing that this will be a marriage, do not interfere. If a maiden does not fancy the suitor who would enter the window, she drives him summarily out with a broomstick.

In the year 1012, we are gravely told, that in England a party of fifteen young women and eighteen young men were dancing and singing in the churchyard of a church dedicated to St. Magnus on the day before Christmas. Their revels disturbed the devotions of one Robert, a priest, who was celebrating mass within the church. Therefore, in his ire, he prayed that these giddy young people might dance without ceasing for a whole year. And, as the prayers of the righteous are said to avail much, this merry company danced on and on throughout the livelong year—knowing no hunger, nor thirst, nor wear of apparel, nor even weariness, although they wore the earth away beneath them until they were sunk up to their middle.

"A Christmas gambol oft would cheer,
The poor man's heart through half the year."

But this merry-making seems to have lasted from Christmas until Christmas again.

In Sweden, the Trolls, who are said to be a queer little people, living in caverns under the hills, come out to celebrate Christmas with high revelry, and then it is not deemed safe for any Christian to be abroad.

The heaths are all covered with witches, elves, and Trolls, some riding on wolves, some on brooms, some on shovels, and all hastening to their places of assemblage, where they dance under the stones. These stones they raise up on pillars—and then under them dance, sing, and drink.

On Christmas morning, between the time of cock-crowing and daybreak, it is considered to be as much as one's life is worth to be abroad.

On the wall of Voxtorp Church in Smoland, there is a painting which represents a knight named Herve Ulf, who, one Christmas morning, received a drinking-horn from his Troll-wife in one hand, while with the other he smote off her head. Then, taking the horn with him, he rode off to church. For this act the King commanded him to call himself Trolle, and to have for his coat-of-arms a Troll without a head. This wonderful drinking-horn was of three hundred colors, and was long preserved in the cathedral of Wexio; but when, in the year 1570 the Danes burned Wexio, they bore away the horn to Denmark.

It may be useful to some of our fair readers to learn that if water is drawn at midnight, in silence, upon certain holyday nights, as Christmas or St. John's Eve, from springs which have been consecrated to some divinity, and this water be bathed in, it will impart health and beauty for the whole year.

But this might prove a dangerous experiment to try, since we are told that on Christmas Eve, at the solemn hour of twelve, all water is turned into wine. Moreover, it is averred by the gossips, that once upon this charmed eve a woman was foolhardy enough to go alone to a well to draw water, and as she was bending over the well, she heard a voice saying:

"All water is wine,
And thy two eyes are mine!"

and immediately she was deprived of both her eyes.

Here is a queer method the Germans have of quieting a restless baby. They say: "In the Twelfths (meaning the twelve days of Christmas) a piece of yarn should be spun and wound the contrary way, through which if a child that is unquiet be put thrice, it will then become quiet." Or if it be put as many times through the steps of a ladder, or through its mother's wedding-dress, it will have the same beneficial effect.

These little items may be useful for young married people to know.

If a girl wishes to know to what station of life her future husband will belong, she must listen upon Christmas Eve to the singing of the teakettle upon the stove. If the water makes a roaring sound, he will be a smith, and so on.

But alas! the good old times are gone forever when the industrious maiden found an incentive to toil in her firm belief that the good fairies who wait their rounds at Christmas time would not fail to reward her—just as much as little children now-a-days expect great things from Santa Claus, if they are only good!

"Farewell rewards and fairies,
Good housewives now may say;
* * * * * * *
And though they sweep their hearths no less
Than maids were wont to doe,
Yet who of late for cleanliness
Finds sixpence in her shooe?"

A FRIEND'S REPLY.—A gentle Quaker had two horses, a very good and a very poor one. When seen riding the latter, it turned out that his better half had taken the good one. "What!" said a sneering bachelor, "how comes it that you let your wife ride the better horse?" The only reply was: "Friend, when thee be married thee'll know.

THE FROST CHILD.

It was a Christmas night, and from his high Northern home, where he sits alone on a glittering throne by the side of his father, King Winter, the Frost Child descended into the milder zone to roam through the cities of the world, and look in at windows draped for the holidays. Though he came from the cold, he was not cold. Over the yellow of his hair he wore a coronet that shone with the eternal brightness of the diamond. Two luminous rings rose to the level of his crowned head, like the pinions of the cherubim in the pictures of old time. In his hand he bore a wand that he had brought out of his father's kingdom, and as he waved it before him the air filled with myriads of frost flakes, the little laughing rivulet ceased her dancing and became a sheet of pearl. Fine, ethereal, transparent as a veil, the breath of the Frost Child diffused itself and made an atmosphere about him as he flew. The branches of the cypress and hemlock showed a glittering coat of mail when he went by, and reeds, grasses and tender shrubs glittered beneath the treasure that he scattered over them.

He stopped before the palace of a great lady, "I will tell her some tales of my father's kingdom," he said, and forthwith he fell to tracing blossoming ferns and glowing stars over all her window panes. On all her laurel bushes he hung wreaths of frost flowers, and decorating her house and grounds he wrought all night, but in the morning he vanished away, so that when the lady asked, "Where is the exquisite artist?" no one was able to tell.

He stood at last within a large and brilliant city. From many a church spire silver bells rang in the happy Christmas eve. Waxen tapers sparkled on the altars and in the windows. The shop windows flashed with forms of costly beauty—a blaze of jewels. Every where were merry groups of men, women and children, hurrying to and fro. Christmas trees showed through half-open doors, and gayety and good will filled the streets. The Frost Child saw some wanderers that he did not like, but being a Frost Child and a son of King Winter, he could not understand that they were poor and suffering, and blamed them for their sadness while all around was glad. Flashing in his jewels, unseen himself, he mingled with the throng, playing many a merry trick, touching with his wand the beard of some young man and fringing it with white. On the cheek of beauty he froze the tear ere it could fall; he tinged the finger-tips that were wrapped in sealskin, and gave many a poor child a slap on the already too red cheek. With his wand he drove some old men and women fiercely over the smooth ice of the pavements. He stopped to look in at the windows, always leaving his pictures, stars and ferns blossoming all delicately fair on the smooth tablet of crystal.

At last he waited before a window well lighted in a shop of the second or third grade, very pretty, but mostly in it were displayed articles of use. This child could not understand pain, hunger or cold. No emotion had ever kindled within or warmed the heart of the Frost Child. A beautiful Italian girl was looking in wistfully at a tippet of down, a bright red flannel petticoat, a hood, and a pair of shoes. The extreme fever of exhaustion had settled like a red rose leaf on each cheek; her feverish lips were slightly parted; her breathing was hurried and quick. A soiled boquet was in her hand, the last remnant of her day's labor. The Frost Child breathed upon it; it shrivelled and collapsed. A few small coins were in her hand also, but not enough to buy shoes, tippet or hood. Unseen himself, the Frost Child drew yet nearer to her heart; his coronet of diamond brightness touched her bosom. She shivered a little, trembled and walked on. The Frost Child followed, now near and now afar off, but ever keeping her in sight. The two passed on up the winding ways of the city.

"She is more beautiful than the brightness of my father's throne," whispered the Frost Child to himself; "I will steal her away and she shall be with me and my father alone in that solitary kingdom of light."

"I can go no farther," sighed the Italian girl; "I am weary and must sleep."

She sat upon the great cathedral's step, and laying one arm on the next step above she rested on it her weary head. The jubilant notes of the organ exultingly sang the songs of May and the stars. They seemed to flood the church, and issuing therefrom to surge and roll above her drooping form like billows of fire, for she was no longer cold. The Frost Child stood beside her unseen, but the shining nimbus of his person enveloped both. Languor and sweetness, ease and rest possessed her. So fell the Italian girl into a long, long dream. The gay crowd of the church passed out—girls in dresses of gleaming satin, and matrons in velvet and diamonds, but none tarried to see the girl who had fallen asleep on the fair Christmas night. The Frost Child waited by her side; more luminous his starry eyes grew through the darkness of the Christmas night, and sparkled like blades of fine Damascus the coronet set in the yellow brightness of his hair. He waved his wand three times above the head of the sleeping girl; her form shrivelled, and only a little bit of pale white clay was left in her place, for the wraith of the Italian flower girl, out of the nimbus that surrounded both, arose fairer than any Christmas light, and with the Frost Child floated away.

HOME POLITENESS.

Should an acquaintance tread on your dress—your best, your very best—and by accident tear it, how profuse you are with your, "Never mind; don't think of it; I don't care at all." If a husband does it he gets a frown; if a child, he is chastised.

Ah! these are little things, say you. They tell mightily on the heart, be assured, little as they are.

A gentleman stops at a friend's house and finds it in confusion. "He don't see anything to apologize for; never thinks of such matters; everything is all right;" cold supper, cold room, crying children—"perfectly comfortable."

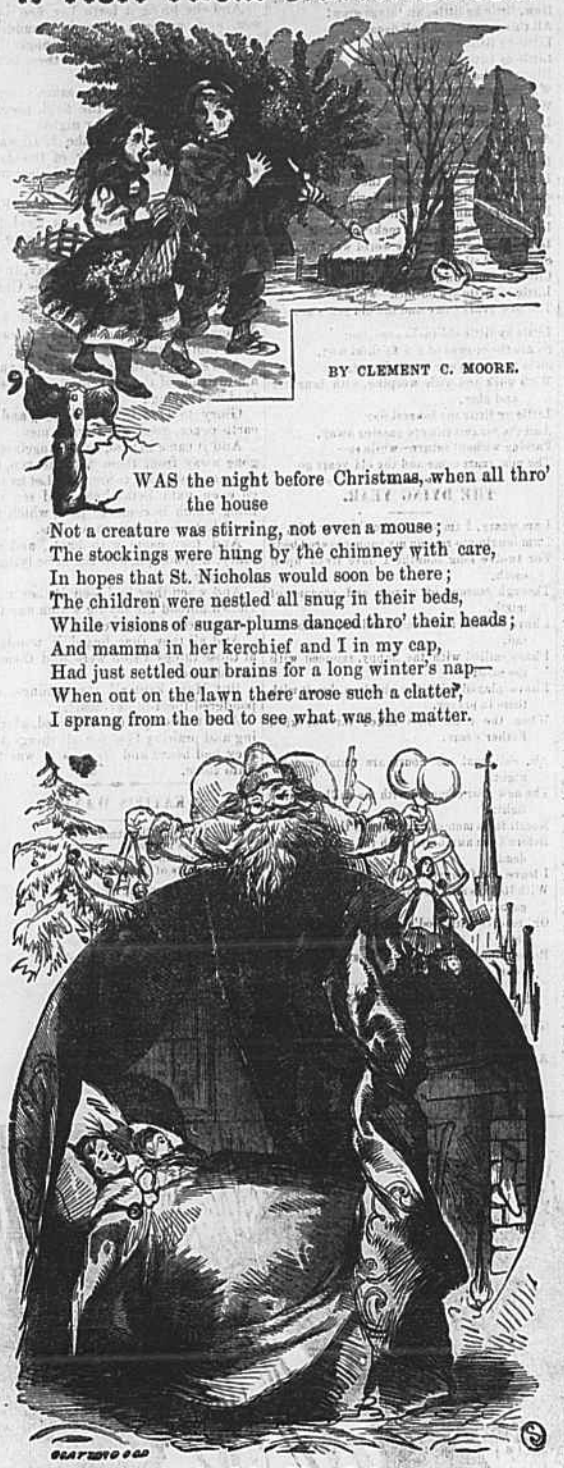
He goes home, his wife has been taking care of the sick ones, and worked her life almost out. "Don't see why things can't be kept in better order; there never was such cross children before." No apologies except away from home.

Why not be polite at home? Why not use freely the golden coin of courtesy? How sweet they sound, those little words, "I thank you," or "You are very kind!" Doubly, yes trebly sweet, from the lips we love, when heart-smiles make the eye sparkle with the clear light of affection.

Be polite to your children. Do you expect them to be mindful of your welfare, to grow glad at your approach, to bound away to your pleasure before your request is half spoken? Then, with all your dignity and authority mingle politeness. Give it a niche in your household temple. Only then will you have the true secret of sending out into the world really finished gentlemen and ladies.

Again, we say unto all be polite.

A VISIT FROM SANTA CLAUS.



BY CLEMENT C. MOORE.

WAS the night before Christmas, when all thro' the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas would soon be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds,
While visions of sugar-plums danced thro' their heads;
And mamma in her kerchief and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's nap—
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
I sprang from the bed to see what was the matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash;
The moon on the breast of the new fallen snow,
Gave the lustre of mid-day to objects below,
When what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer,
With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment, it must be St. Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled and shouted and called them by name:
"Now Dasher! now Dancer! now Prancer! now Vixen!
On, Comet! on, Cupid! on, Donder and Blixen!
To the top of the porch! To the top of the wall!
Now, dash away, dash away, dash away, all!"

As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle mount to the sky,
So up to the housetop the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of toys and St. Nicholas, too.
And then in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a bound.
He was dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.
A bundle of toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler just opening his pack.
His eyes—how they twinkled! his dimples—how merry!
His cheeks were like roses, his nose like a cherry;
His droll little mouth was drawn up like a bow,
And the beard on his chin was as white as the snow,
The stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth,
And the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face, and a little round belly,
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf;
And I laughed, when I saw him, in spite of myself.
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a jerk
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose.
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a whistle,
And away they all flew, like the down of the thistle;

But I heard him exclaim, are he drove out of sight,
"HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!"

WHO IS THE AUTHOR OF—?

How many of the eager questioners who have been met with, "Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies," know that the tantalizing response is a direct quotation from Goldsmith? To him we are also indebted for "These little things are great to little men." And in Goldsmith's "Hermit" we find "Man wants but little here below, nor wants that little long;" but earlier than that, Dr. Young had said, in his "Night Thoughts," "Man wants but little, nor that little long." "All that glitters is not gold," is from Shakspeare.

A question arose at a small party as to the origin of a line familiar to nearly every one present, "What shadows we are, what shadows we pursue!" and after great diversity of opinion and considerable search, it was found that not one of the company had given the true source. It is from a speech of Edmund Burke, delivered at Bristol, on declining the poll in 1780.

Daniel Defoe is quoted as the author of the proverb, "God no sooner builds a church than the devil puts up a chapel." Defoe wrote a poem, one verse of which was as follows:

"Whenever God erects a house of prayer,
The devil is sure to build a chapel there;
And 'twill be found, upon examination,
The latter has the largest congregation."

But, in writing this, Defoe only versified a well-known proverb of his day.

Burton, in his Anatomy of Melancholy," says: "Where God hath a temple the devil will have a chapel;" and Herbert, in his Jacula Prudentum, expresses the same idea.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceedingly small," may be found among Longfellow's Poetical Aphorisms, and is a translation from Frederick von Logan, a writer of the seventeenth century. From Pope's rich stores of thought we gather many popular maxims.

"Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw;" "Whatever is, is right;" "Order is heaven's first law;" "Honor and shame from no condition rise;" "An honest man is the noblest work of God," may all be found in Pope's Essay on Man. In his Essay on Criticism, "A little learning is a dangerous thing;" "To err is human, to forgive divine;" "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread;" "Your ease in writing comes from art, not chance—as those move easiest who have learned to dance." The well-known line, "Well should you practice who so well can preach," occurs in his Wife of Bath. There is an Italian proverb used in the extravagance of flattery expressive of this idea:

"When nature made thee she broke the mould."

Byron uses it in the closing lines of his monody on the death of Sheridan:

"Sighing that nature formed but one such man,
And broke the die in moulding Sheridan."

The source of the common saying, "Consistency, thou art a jewel," has puzzled many a scholar, and whether or not the following authority may be relied upon as the starting point, or as only using a borrowed idea, I can not assert. In a ballad, entitled "Jolly Robyn Roughhead," published in 1764, in a little volume of English and Scotch ballads, the poet bewails the extravagance in dress, which he considers the grand enormity of his day, and makes Robyn address his wife as follows:

"Tush! tush, my lassie! such thoughts resigne,
Comparisons are cruel,
Fine dresses suit to frames as fine,
Consistencie's a jewel!"

"We live in deeds, not years," "Life is but a means unto an end," and, "All up-hill work when we would do, all down-hill when we suffer," are quotations from Bailey's "Festus."

For some time there was a considerable perplexity as to the origin of the familiar line, "Though lost to sight, to memory dear," but it has been finally settled that it originated with Ruthven Jenkyns, and was first published in the *Greenwich Magazine* for mariners in 1701.

"Through thick and thin," "None but the brave deserve the fair," and "Death and death's half-brother sleep," are from Dryden.

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view," and "Like angels' visits, few and far between," are from Campbell's "Pleasures of Hope."

In a collection of old songs, published in the sixteenth century, we find, "The darkest hour is just before the dawn." To those great store-houses of wise sayings, Shakspeare's works, the following owe their origin: "Double, double toil and trouble," "Brevity is the soul of wit," "Curses not loud but deep," "Make assurance doubly sure," "We shall not look upon his like again," and so many others that we find it dangerous, with our limited space, to even make a commencement.

"The good die first, and they whose hearts are as dry as summer dust burn to the socket," is from Wordsworth's "Excursion." "Blessings brighten as they take flight," from Young's "Night Thoughts." "God made the country and man made the town," from Cowper's "Task," which is also the source of "The cup that cheers but not inebriates," and the oft-quoted line, "Not much the worse for wear."

Congreve, in his play of "The Old Bachelor," gives us "Married in haste, we may repent at leisure;" and "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast" is by the same author, and occurs in his "Morning Bride."

"Where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise," is in Gray's "Ode on Eton College." "Christmas comes but once a year," and "It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good," were written by Thomas Tusser in 1580. "Straws show which way the wind blows," by James Cheatham, and "Out of sight, out of mind," by Lord Brooke.

The old phrase, "There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip," is a literary translation of an an old Greek hexameter line; and when we talk of smiling through tears, we are quoting Homer. The happy expression, "*nullum quod tetigit non ornavit*," is the phrase employed by Dr. Johnson in his epitaph on Goldsmith to express the genius of his friend. The line so often attributed to Shakspeare, "A fellow feeling makes one wondrous kind," was written by Garrick in the occasional prologue spoken by him on leaving the stage. Owen Feltham, the author of "The Resolves," is one of those unfortunate men who have written many good and pithy things while others have usurped the credit of them; such, for instance, as "Without a certain modicum of chaff the horse is apt to bolt his oats," which has been so dextrously applied. Macaulay has the reputation of many a brilliant epigram for which he was indebted far more to his gigantic memory than to his originality. The often quoted image of the traveler from New Zealand, taking his stand on a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's, is borrowed from Horace Walpole. "The Imitation of Christ," Herbert's "*Iacula Prudentium*," and Franklin's works are the great storehouses of many proverbs and quotations. From the first we have, "Man proposes, but God disposes." "Of two evils, the less is always to be chosen." "Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise," is from Franklin; so also is, "God helps them that help themselves;" "He that goes a borrowing goes a sorrowing;" "Continual dropping wears away stones;" though the germ of this, by the way, is to be found in Lucretius and Ovid. Rabelais has given us many popular phrases, such as "He thought the moon was made of green cheese;" "By robbing Peter he paid Paul;" "The devil was sick, the devil a monk would be; the devil was well, the devil a monk was he." The phrase, "War even to the knife," was the answer of Palofax, the Governor of Saragoza, when he was summoned to surrender by the French, who were besieging the city in 1808. One of the sources from which many of our popular quotations have flowed, is Lord Roscommon's Essay on Translated Verse; for example, the couplet so confidently attributed to Pope, "Immodest words admit of no defense, for want of decency is want of sense;" and "Choose an author as you choose a friend." Lord Lytton somewhere says that Horace has supplied, after Shakspeare, the greatest number of quotations. It is true he is the author who rises most readily to the lips of the scholar, and by his marvelous powers of uniting happy condensation with strong common sense affords the readiest medium of expressing the ordinary incidents of life in the terest language; but curiously enough there are very few standard quotations to be culled from his works. Terence and Plautus have furnished us with a far greater number, though we owe a still larger debt of gratitude to Virgil and Ovid. In Greek literature the great storehouses of quotations are undoubtedly the fragments of the tragic and comic poets, particularly Mehander, whose sayings have been flittered through a thousand channels, and form no inconsiderable part of the sum of the familiar quotations most in vogue.

A HUSBAND IN THE KITCHEN.

A NORSE LEGEND.

Once upon a time there was a man so surly and cross that he never thought his wife did any thing right in the house. So one evening in hay-making time, he came home, scolding and swearing, and showing his teeth and making a dust.

"Dear love, don't be angry, there's a good man," said his goody; "to-morrow let's change our work. I'll go with the mowers and mow, and you shall mind the house.

Yes! the husband thought that would do very well.

So, early next morning, his goody took a scythe over her shoulders and went out into the hayfield with the mowers and began to mow; but the man was to mind the house and do the work at home.

First of all he wanted to churn butter, but when he had churned awhile he got thirsty, and went down to the cellar to tap a barrel of ale. So, just when he had knocked in the bung, and was putting the tap into the cask, he heard the pig come into the kitchen overhead. Then off he ran up the cellar sfairs, with the tap in his hand, as fast as he could, to look after the pig, lest it should upset the churn. But when he got up and saw that the pig had already knocked the churn over, and stood there, rooting and grunting among the cream, which was running all over the floor, he got so wild with rage that he quite forgot the barrel of ale, and ran at the pig as hard as he could. He caught it, too, just as it ran out of doors, and gave it such a kick that piggy lay for dead on the spot. Then, all at once, he remembered that he had the tap in his hand; and when he got down to the cellar, every drop of ale had ran out of the cask.

Then he went into the dairy and found enough cream left to fill the churn again; and so he began to churn, for butter they must have for dinner. When he had churned a bit, he remembered that their milking cow was still up in the byre, and hadn't had a bit to eat or a a drop to drink all the morning, though the sun was high. Then all at once he thought it was too far to take her to the meadow, so he'd just get her up on the house-top—for the house, you must know, was thatched with sods, and a fine crop of grass was growing there. Now, their house lay close up against a steep down and he thought if he laid a plank across to the thatch at the back, he'd easily get the cow up.

But still he couldn't leave the churn, for there was his little babe crawling about on the floor, and if he left it, he thought, the child was sure to upset it. So he took the churn on his back, and went out with it; but then he thought he'd better first water the cow before he turned her out on the thatch; so he took up a bucket to draw water out of the well; but as he stooped down at the well's brink, all the cream ran out of the churn over his shoulders and so down into the well.

Now it was near dinner time, and he had not even got the butter yet; so he thought he had better boil the porridge, and filled the pot with water and hung it over the fire. When he had done that, he thought the cow might, perhaps, fall off the thatch and break her legs or neck. So he got up on the house, to tie her up. One end of the rope he tied fast to the cow's neck, and the other he slipped down the chimney, and tied round his own thigh; and he began to make haste, for the water now began to boil in the pot, and he had still to grind the oatmeal.

So he began to grind away; but while he was hard at it, down fell the cow off the house-top after all, and as she fell she dragged the man up to the chimney by the rope. There he stuck fast; and as for the cow, she hung half way down the wall, swinging between heaven and earth, for she could neither get down nor up.

And now the goody had waited seven lengths and seven breadths for her husband to come and call them home to dinner; but never a call had they had. At last she thought she'd waited long enough, and went home. But when she got there, and found the cow hanging in such an ugly place, she ran up and cut the rope in two with her scythe. But, as she did this, down came her husband out of the chimney; and so when his old dame came inside the kitchen, there she found him standing on his head in the porridge pot.

THE POOR BOY'S CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY WILL S. HAYS.

"Mamma, why don't you smile to-night,
For this is Christmas Eve?
This is a time for joy and mirth,
And not a time to grieve.
Hang up your stocking; come, be glad;
Put mine beside it, too;
If old Kris Kringle don't fill mine,
He may fill yours for you."

"For *me*, my child; ah, no, not *me*.
The wolf is at our door.
Kris Kringle only knows the rich,
And we are very poor."
And that poor mother bowed her heart
With woe and grief oppressed.
She kissed her boy and folded him
Still closer to her breast.

"Well," said the child, "mamma, don't weep.
I know we want for bread
And other things which we would have
If papa was not dead.
It is so cold; see how it snows.
Mamma, your face and ears
Are just as cold as ice—don't cry,
The rich don't care for tears!"

"My child, God bless you!" and she kissed
Her little darling's cheek.
She looked upon his smiling face
As if she dared to speak.
Her eyes met his—tears met with smiles.
She sobbed, "O! must it be
That I must live a life of—No!
God help and pitty me!"

His little arms, so thin and pale,
Locked in their close embrace
That mother's neck, and with his lips
Kissed tear-drops from her face.
"Mamma," said he, "'tis Christmas Eve;
Come, let us happy be.
Don't talk of *where*, but *live*, mamma,
For *God*, yourself and *me*.
* * * * *

She knelt and prayed; God lent His ear,
And heard her earnest prayer;
And they were happy Christmas day—
A *Christian* had been there.
O! ye whom God hath favored so,
Don't close your selfish door,
And shut your comforts up inside;
Go share them with the poor.

DREAM OF CHRISTMAS EVE.

I dreamed that I was carried back for more than eighteen hundred years, and that I was in Jerusalem, in a humble cottage, where around a cheerful fire there were gathered the father, mother and a little child. The father and mother were Joseph and the blessed Virgin Mary, and the child Jesus. It was the eve of the tenth birthday of that wonderful child. Though the room was furnished in the simplest manner, and there was nothing about it to attract the admiration of those who care for worldly splendor, yet it appeared to me the very home of purity and peace. I thought, in the calm, quiet, loving expression of father and mother, and in the radiant, angelic face of that beautiful boy, there was no need of what we call "creature comforts" to make a paradise of the humblest fireside.

While wrapt with intense interest in the scene upon which my vision rested, the voice of the child Jesus, with its silvery tones, fell upon my ear. "Dear mother," he said, "it is ten years to-night since I was born into this world. I did not come to you as the children of other mothers come. The angels sang at my birth, and the heavens were lighted up to tell a dark and sinful world of the advent of its long-promised deliverer. There are many years to pass away before I am to leave this humble home to do the great work for which I am sent. But even now I am to be about my father's business. I have work to do as a child. Now it is that I am to learn my childhood's lessons. I want to know by experience all their joys and sorrows, to learn how to rejoice with them when they are glad, and to weep with them when they are sorry. It is for this reason that I go out upon the streets and join in their sports, to learn all about them, and to teach them by example that they must be generous, unselfish and forgiving. Myriads of children will come into the world whose footsteps I am to guide, whose sorrows I am to soothe, and whose joys I am to hallow, and therefore it is, I would have my child's heart taught, that I may sympathize with them when they shall come to me as their God and Savior."

The wondering parents listen with holy awe to the wonderful words of their wonderful child. They knew but very imperfectly what was the purpose of His mission to earth, and it was well they did not know what a path of suffering was before Him. His conception and birth had been marvelous; and no doubt from year to year, as He "grew in wisdom and stature," they had occasional glimpses of the glory to be revealed in Him. The Bible tells us: "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart."

Suddenly, in my dream, the whole scene was changed, and I was in a church where were gathered together a great number of children. It was Christmas eve, and a Christmas tree sparkled with light, and children with glad voices and joyous faces were singing their carols of the Babe in Bethlehem. Among that group, as by the wand of the magician, the *radiant* face was revealed to me of that same little child whom I had seen in Jerusalem. There could be no mistaking that perfect form, that graceful manner, nor the angelic expression of that face. He seemed to have come unnoticed, and he glided silently around, whispering into the ear of one and another some sweet and heavenly thought, and the face of each child into whose ear He thus breathed lighted up with a holy joy.

As I saw him thus in the vision of my dream, busy in ministering unseen to the happiness of childhood, and seeming to catch the key-note of their joyous prattle, and even to mingle in their noisy glee, O, how I wished that the eyes of every child then could be open to see the child Jesus, who still comes to children as a child to let them know how He can and does love them.

But, then, I remembered that when He went up before the wondering gaze of His disciples, and a cloud received Him out of their sight, He left the earth, no more to be seen in human form until He shall come again, at the last day, in power and great glory.

I could not, therefore, hope that my wish would be gratified. I watched his every movement with eager curiosity, and in momentary fear that the blessed vision would melt away into a shadow. But he did not seem to grow weary of the festive scene. His child's heart was in joyous accord with the little ones, and he lingered to catch the last notes of their simple carols.

At last methought there came, as from a distance, the sound of music, as of the warbling of angels, and nearer and nearer, and clearer and clearer, and sweeter and sweeter the notes of heavenly harmony fell upon my ears, and then came the flashes of the silver wings of a multitude of the Heavenly Host, when suddenly the child Jesus, radiant with the halo of Divinity, rose up before me. As he was borne out of my sight I heard a voice repeating, in the same silvery tones which greeted my ears from the humble cottage in Jerusalem, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for such is the Kingdom of Heaven."